

# The Alliance

## Maricopa County Environmental Services Department

### ***It's Summer In Arizona, So What's Hot Besides The Weather?***

Maricopa County's New Food Service Award System is the *Hottest* and it's Coming Soon!

By: David Ludwig, M.P.H., R.S.,  
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Manager

Upon completion of every food inspection, the Environmental Health Professional will be presenting the top establishments with an award whenever a Gold or Silver Certificate is achieved.

The **"Gold Certificate"** is earned when an establishment is ranked in the top 25% of their inspection category. These establishments are truly the best in their class and the Award Program Certificate is to display for the public, staff and the media. What better way to show off your excellences!

The **"Silver Certificate"** also indicates the hard work an establishment has made in the area of health and sanitation. Establishments ranking between the 74<sup>th</sup>

and 25<sup>th</sup> percentile will receive a silver certificate which can proudly be displayed at the front entrance.

The percentile rankings are based on last year's scoring average within a category. The range within the category will be established for a one-year period allowing operators to gauge their goals to move up in an award category.

The breakdown of the Certificate Program for each of the different permit types can be found on page two (Remember a score of **zero** is perfect!).

It should be noted that with a percentile ranking program, there are as many establishments with Gold Certificates as there are with no awards and there are twice as many in the Silver Certificate range. Seventy-five percent of es-

tablishments will receive an award and this number may grow with static goals being set for a one year period.

You will also notice there are other spaces on the award certificate (see example on page three). An establishment is eligible for a new award on every unannounced full service inspection. Now you can truly become a five Gold Certificate establishment and have the seals to prove it!

If you have any questions about your classification type, please ask your Environmental Health Inspector or contact the Regional Office Supervisor.

Good Luck with the "Heat of Summer" and gaining your much deserved award!

Volume 3, Issue 2  
August 2003

Edited by:  
Darcy Brondt, R.S.



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# Certificate Program Breakdown and Class Criteria

## Eating and Drinking 0-9 Seats

AWARD	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5
<b>GOLD</b>	0	0-1	0-2	0-2	0
<b>SILVER</b>	1-8	2-15	3-19	3-21	1-31
No Award	9+	16+	20+	22+	32+

## Eating and Drinking 10+ Seats

AWARD	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5
<b>GOLD</b>	0	0-1	0-5	0-5	0-6
<b>SILVER</b>	2-10	2-13	6-22	6-27	7-34
No Award	11+	14+	23+	28+	35+

AWARD	Bakery	Retail Grocery Small	Retail Grocery Large	Meat Market	Catering
<b>GOLD</b>	0-1	0	0-1	0-1	0
<b>SILVER</b>	2-13	1-5	2-10	2-15	1-13
No Award	14+	6+	11+	16+	14+

AWARD	Bottled Water	Jobber	Processor	Ice Manufacturer	Damaged Foods
<b>GOLD</b>	0	0	0	0-1	0
<b>SILVER</b>	1-4	1-2	1-11	2-5	1-9
No Award	5+	3+	12+	6+	10+

AWARD	Refrigerated Warehouse	Day Care	Misc. Foods	Food Banks
<b>GOLD</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>SILVER</b>	1-2	1-10	1	1-2
No Award	3+	11+	2+	3+

**Class 1**—This category is limited to pre-packaged non-potentially hazardous foods and the limited preparation of non-potentially hazardous foods.

**Class 2**—Limited menu (one or two main items). Pre-packaged raw ingredients are cooked or prepared to order. Retail food operations exclude deli or seafood departments. Raw ingredients require minimal assembly. Most products are cooked/prepared and served immediately. Hot and cold holding of potentially hazardous foods is restricted to single meal service. Preparation processes requiring cooking, cooling, and re-heating are limited to one or two potentially hazardous foods.

**Class 3**—Menu items are prepared, cooked and served to the customer. Raw ingredients require minimal assembly. Hot and cold holding of potentially hazardous foods is restricted to single meal service. Extensive handling of raw ingredients. Preparation process includes the cooking, cooling and re-heating of potentially hazardous foods. A variety of processes require hot and cold holding of potentially hazardous food. Advance preparation for next-day service is limited to two or three items. Retail food operations include deli and seafood departments. Establishments doing food processing at retail.

**Class 4**—Extensive handling of raw ingredients. Preparation processes include the cooking, cooling, and re-heating of potentially hazardous foods. A variety of processes require hot and cold holding of potentially hazardous foods. Food processes include advanced preparation for next-day service.

**Class 5**—Extensive handling of raw ingredients. Food processing at the retail level, e.g., smoking and curing; reduced oxygen packaging for extended shelf life. Category would also include those facilities whose primary service population is immunocompromised.

## Award Certificate Format

# ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

## Environmental Health Division

### AWARD CERTIFICATE

Name of Business -- *Permit Type*  
Permit Number



08/03/03



11/10/03



02/15/03



Maricopa County  
Environmental Services Department  
Environmental Health Division

For more information, please visit [www.maricopa.gov/envsvc](http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc).

This card shall remain the property of Maricopa County.

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Award Certificate System

### **Will I receive a seal on my Award Certificate every time an inspector visits my establishment?**

No, you will only receive a seal for unannounced scored inspections. Gold and silver seals will not be issued for reinspections, complaint responses or during training exercises.

### **Where should I post my Award?**

We would prefer that Award Certificates be placed in a conspicuous location that is easily accessible and visible by the public.

### **What happens if my card is lost or damaged?**

In cases of accidental loss or damage, your inspector may issue a new card. The card, however, will reflect past inspection awards or lack thereof.

### **Will your website indicate scores and Awards given at each establishment?**

Our website is currently under construction. Eventually, the web will indicate inspection data, reinspection corrective actions, overall scores and

if an award is given. Continue to check <http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/Envhlth.asp> for updated information on this new system.

### **Will everyone receive a card right away?**

No, cards will be issued over the next three to six months during our normal inspection schedule.

**Contact your assigned Environmental Health Specialist or call 602-506-6970 for additional information.**

## Violation Weight Table

In this scoring system, major and non-major violations have been assigned different weights. Major violations range in weight from five to twenty points and non-majors between one and three points. The weights are based on information from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) who identified "risk factors" for foodborne illness. Based on research, it was determined that some violations are more commonly associated with foodborne outbreaks than others. The violation weights have been varied to stress the importance of those food handling practices. Below is an overview of those violations with their assigned point values:

<b>20 Point Violations</b> 1A – Raw animal foods not cooked to proper minimum temperatures 4A – Foods not cooled in an appropriate time and to proper temperatures 12A – Persons with discharges from eyes, nose, or throat working with food or food contact surfaces 13A – Bare hand contact with ready to eat foods 26C – Reduced oxygen packaging without an approved HACCP plan	<b>15 Point Violations</b> 2A – Improper hot holding of potentially hazardous foods 5A – Improper cold holding of potentially hazardous foods 16A – Improper receiving of food 16B – Improper shell egg receiving 16C – Using fluid eggs that have not been pasteurized for susceptible population 24A – Person in charge not present / designated at the food establishment
<b>10 Point Violations</b> 3A – Improper re-heating of foods 6A – Hands not washed and clean when necessary 8A – Handwashing procedures not followed 15A – Food not from approved sources/safe 15C – Raw fish not treated for parasite destruction 15E – Unsafe food not properly discarded 15H – Bottled water not from an approved source 17A – Shellfish tags not present 18A – Food not protected from cross contamination 19A – Re-service of food 19C – Food contacting unsanitized surfaces 20A – Food contact surfaces not cleaned frequently enough 20B – Food contact surfaces not clean to sight and touch 22B – Date marked food not disposed of 24B – Manager not certified and does not demonstrate applicable food safety knowledge 25A – Improperly using time as a control	<b>All other major violations are 5 points</b>  <b>3 Point Violations</b> PE1 – Washing hands in wrong sink H1 – Hand sanitizer not approved H2 – Hand sink not accessible H4 – No soap at handsinks H5 – No towels at handsinks H6 – Handwashing supplies at mop sink S3 – Freezing records for fish not created and kept F1 – Fruits/Vegetables not washed prior to handling W4 – Water used as a sanitizer out of temperature range for mechanical warewashing W22 – Improper water pressure for mechanical warewashing W23 – Improper use of detergent-sanitizer C5 – Non-major cleaning of food contact surfaces  <b>All other non-major violations are 1 point</b>

### FINDING RESTAURANT RATINGS ON THE WEB

1. From our main website, [www.maricopa.gov](http://www.maricopa.gov), select Restaurant Ratings from the Quick Links section.
2. Using the recommended tips in the Business search screen, find your establishment by entering the Business Name and/or Street and select Search.
3. Your search may yield more than one establishment. Select the restaurant you are looking for by clicking on the Permit ID link.
4. At the Inspection List screen, select the date of the inspection/visit you would like to review. Click on the date of the inspection/visit to view comments and violations for that day.

# FDA Fact Sheet on Hand Hygiene in Retail & Food Service Establishments—May 2003

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are working together to control the transmission of pathogens that can result in foodborne illnesses. Transmission of pathogenic bacteria, viruses and parasites from raw food or from ill workers to food by way of improperly washed hands continues to be one of several major factors in the spread of foodborne illnesses.

FDA's Food Code contains the Federal recommendations for preventing foodborne illness in restaurants, grocery stores, institutions and vending locations. Local, state and federal regulators use the FDA Food Code as a model to help develop or update their own food safety rules and to be consistent with national food regulatory policy. The Food Code contains specific hand hygiene guidance for retail and food service workers describing when, where, and how to wash and sanitize hands. Hand sanitizers, meeting specific criteria described in section 2-301.16 of the Food Code, may be used **after proper hand washing** in retail and food service.

## CAN ALCOHOL-BASED HAND GELS SERVE AS A SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE TO HANDWASHING FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICE WORKERS?

CDC recently issued "*CDC Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings*" (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports, October 25, 2002). The guidance document recommends alcohol-based hand gel as a suitable alternative to handwashing for health-care personnel in **health-care settings**. These guidelines were not intended to apply to food establishments. This exclusion is based on the differences in controlling common nosocomial pathogens in health-care settings and common foodborne pathogens in retail and food service

settings. Some significant differences between health-care settings and retail/food service settings include:

### TYPES OF PATHOGENS

The pathogens most commonly transmitted by hands in health-care settings differ from those in retail and food service settings. In health-care, nosocomial bacterial pathogens and lipophilic viruses predominate, while in food service and retail establishments we are primarily concerned with a different set of fecal pathogens. Common nosocomial pathogens are typically transmitted from person-to-person in health-care settings. In retail and food service settings, foodborne pathogens are transmitted through the fecal-oral route from contaminated hands to food items. Controlling the transmission of fecal bacteria, enteric non-lipophilic viruses, and protozoan oocysts, which can contaminate hands with a very high titer, is a particular concern. CDC estimates the non-lipophilic virus, Norovirus (Norwalk-like virus) to be the leading cause of foodborne illness in the United States.

### EFFICACY AND APPROVAL OF ALCOHOL-BASED HAND GELS

All alcohol-based hand gels applied to human skin are drugs, and must be covered by FDA's Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drug Review or by an FDA-approved new drug application to be legally marketed in the United States. Further, all ingredients, including emollients and perfumes that are constituents of alcohol hand gels used in retail and food service operations must be approved as indirect food additives.

Some in vitro and in vivo published studies suggest that alcohol-based hand gels are highly effective against nosocomial bacterial pathogens of major concern in health-care settings. However the antimicrobial efficacy of alcohol-containing handwashes for

use in any setting remains under review by FDA. Some published studies also indicate that moisture on the hands may interfere with alcohol efficacy. In addition, alcohol has been shown to be ineffective against protozoan oocysts and, depending on the alcohol concentration, time, and viral variant, alcohol may not be effective against hepatitis A, or other non-lipophilic viruses.

### SOIL ON HANDS

The types and levels of soil on the hands of health-care workers differ from food service/retail workers. The type of activities conducted in retail and food service may lead to increased potential for fatty and proteinaceous materials to be on the hands. The fatty and proteinaceous materials may or may not be visible on the hands. Proteinaceous material is known to interfere with and neutralize alcohol efficacy.

Fatty substances can coat and protect pathogens from the action of alcohol. Soap, friction, and running water effectively remove the proteinaceous and fatty materials, and reduce pathogens of concern.

Existing data do not demonstrate that alcohol-based hand gel effectively reduces important infectious foodborne pathogens at levels that occur on food workers' hands, especially if the hands are soiled with fatty and proteinaceous materials. ***Even in health-care settings, the CDC guidelines recommend soap and water handwashing on hands that are visibly soiled, or contaminated with proteinaceous material, rather than using the alcohol-based sanitizers.***

### CONCLUSION

Proper handwashing, as described in the Food Code continues to serve as a vital and necessary public health

(Continued on page 6)

## Domestic Preparedness

*By: Cheryl Piscitella,  
R.S. Bioterrorism  
Response / Food  
Safety Lead Specialist*

Bioterrorism is a complex public health issue involving many agencies at the federal, state and local level. Departments such as the FBI, CDC, HHS, FEMA and local agencies like ADHS, Public Health, and, of course, MCESD are just a very small number of organizations working in cooperation to develop procedures that ensure preparedness.

This type of interagency coordination is a crucial component of preparedness at the local level. In the past, traditional response plans were oriented toward law enforcement and emergency responders without involving local public health agencies.



However, a possible scenario involving a biological attack may result in discreet incidences of illness or death that might not be linked without ongoing communication between agencies.

For example, our foodborne illness program is working with epidemiology and community health nursing to develop a surveillance and response protocol in the event of an outbreak or bioterrorist event. Separately, these agencies may not notice an unusual spike in illnesses reported at a certain location or establishment. But, using combined data and case history, the likelihood of early detection of an unusual event is greater.

Many of the people I have spoken to from what we consider first responder agencies agree

that public health will play a more influential role in a biological event. Our ability to monitor and respond to complaints and outbreaks quickly has and will continue to be a welcome resource for the general public.

I had the privilege to attend the domestic preparedness tabletop exercise in Glendale and the most profound concept I took with me was the necessity for preparedness that is underscored in this quote from a leader of a former German terrorist organization:

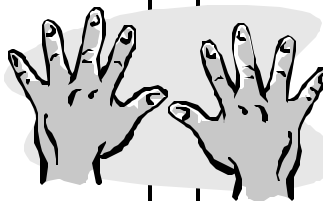
"When we have a free path, we go forward.  
If we meet an obstacle, we go around it.  
If the object cannot be overcome, we retreat.  
When the enemy is unprepared, we surprise him.  
If he is alert, we leave him alone."

## FDA Fact Sheet on Hand Hygiene in Retail & Food Service Establishments—May 2003

*(Continued from page 5)*

practice in retail and food service. Using alcohol gel in place of hand-washing in retail and food service does not adequately reduce important foodborne pathogens on foodworkers' hands. Concern about the practice of using alcohol-based hand gels in place of hand washing with soap and water in a retail or food service setting can be summarized into the following points:  
⇒ Alcohols have very poor activity against bacterial spores, protozoan oocysts, and certain nonenveloped

(nonlipophilic) viruses; and  
⇒ Ingredients used in alcohol-based hand gels for retail or food service must be approved food additives, and approved under the FDA monograph or as a New Drug Application (NDA); and  
⇒ Retail food and food service work involves high potential for wet hands and hands contaminated with proteinaceous material. Scientific research questions the efficacy



of alcohol on moist hands and hands contaminated with proteinaceous material.

FDA and CDC continue to work together to review new data and assure the best public health measures are in place for retail and food service establishments

Source and Reference Information: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~comm/handhyg.html>

# Utilization of Sample Results to Improve Food Safety Systems

By: Mike Shafer, R.S.  
Maricopa County Foodborne  
Illness Program Coordinator

Recently, the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department and the Foodborne Illness (FBI) Program have taken a positive step to improve food safety systems in the facilities we inspect. On average, this Department receives as many as 1,200 complaints of foodborne illness a year from Maricopa County citizens. As an owner or manager of a food facility, you may have experienced a time when your inspector stated they are conducting an inspection in response to an alleged foodborne illness. During this inspection the inspector may have taken samples of various food items to have them tested for potential contamination. Taking food samples is not unusual for a foodborne illness inspection. But what happens after those samples are taken to the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) microbiology laboratory?

Samples are taken for two main objectives: 1) to identify a specific organism or toxin; or 2) for quality control. When looking for a specific organism/toxin, the tests are performed to isolate the organism/toxin if it is present in the sample. When a quality control test is performed, the level of potential contamination is measured. Four categories will be tested:

1. Total aerobic plate count (APC) - This test will indicate whether or not living bacteria are present in the sample. The results are measured in cfu/g or colony forming units

per gram of sample and reflects the total number of live bacteria in the food sample.

2. Total coliform - This test will indicate the level of bacteria, known as coliform, found in the sample. Coliform is found in the feces of warm-blooded animals. Since many species of animals are ubiquitous to the environment, this bacteria can also be found in soil and surface waters.
3. Fecal coliform - This test will indicate the specific level of fecal contamination in the food sample. This test is performed only if the APC and total coliform counts are found to be high, since low counts of all bacteria and coliforms indicate a lesser chance of poor food handling and the presence of fecal coliform.
4. Escherichia coli (E. coli) - This test will indicate an even more specific level of fecal contamination. Many harmless bacteria are found in the intestines of animals and humans. But there are a few pathogens in this group that can cause serious illness, such as *E. Coli O157: H7*. Again, this test would not be done unless the APC and total coliform counts were high.

After completion of the tests (typically a week), the Maricopa County FBI program receives copies of the results and these results are logged into a database. If the results do not meet the industry guidelines for acceptable bacteria levels, a letter is sent to the owner of the facility stating that unacceptable lab results have been re-

ported to this Department and that they should contact their inspector for additional explanation and to schedule a training inspection. The inspector is also notified and will contact the owner to conduct a training inspection of the facility. This inspection will be a more in-depth review of the facilities food safety system with a concentration on the foods that showed contamination. The purpose of the inspection is to determine where in the food flow process the food might have become contaminated.

Once this training inspection has been completed and corrections have been made to the food safety system, the inspector will give the facility time to adjust to any changes that may have been made. The inspector will then return to take follow-up samples of the same food items for repeat laboratory testing. The goal is that the test results will show a decrease in the level of bacterial contamination in the food. Since Maricopa County began detailed tracking of samples results, 92% of all follow-up samples, taken after substandard results and procedural changes, were found to have acceptable levels for bacterial contamination. This high rate of success can be attributed to the positive interactions between the owner/manager and their inspector as well as the efforts of the foodservice staff. The end result of this entire process is two-fold- we have minimized the potential for foodborne illness attributable to your facility and you as the owner/manager will be serving safe food to your customers.

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September is National Food Safety  
Education Month! Visit [http://www.  
foodsafety.gov/~fsg/september.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/~fsg/september.html) for  
information on how to get involved.



## Environmental Health Division Wins Three National Awards

The Environmental Health Division recently received the following awards presented by the National Association of Counties (NACo) – 2003 Achievement Awards:

- **Utilization of Food Sample Results to Improve Food Safety** – submitted by Aimee Upton and the Foodborne Illness Team. This program is explained on page seven.
- **Chinese Liaison Program** – submitted by Les Olson, Tim Hurst and Darcy Brondt documenting the work experience of Li Hwang. Ms. Hwang currently has a district of approximately 50 Chinese food establishments. Li provides Chinese translation, inspections and training to the Chinese restaurant community.
- **Environmental Health Food Establishment Virtual Inspection** – submitted by Adam Kramer. This project provides training for Environmental Health Specialists using an interactive CD.

**We are very proud of the programs this Division has been developing over the years and we are always open to new ideas.**



Please send your suggestions, comments and mailing list requests to Darcy Brondt, Special Projects Coordinator, at [dbrondt@mail.maricopa.gov](mailto:dbrondt@mail.maricopa.gov) or call 602-506-6954.